



ESEA Information Update

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent, P.O. Box 7841/Madison, WI 53707-7841

Bulletin No. 02.03 - **Revised**

February 7, 2003

Topic: New Requirements for Paraprofessionals

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act, the release of the Title I regulation on Nov. 26, 2003, and the Paraprofessional Non-Regulatory Guidance on Nov. 15, 2003, may have a significant impact on duties, training, and qualifications of paraprofessionals working in Title I programs across the state.

Section 1119 of the ESEA requires each local education agency receiving assistance to ensure that all paraprofessionals **hired** after the date of the ESEA reauthorization (Jan. 8, 2002) must have:

- at least two years of higher education that is equivalent to at least 48 semester hours from an accredited higher education institution , **or**
- obtained an associate (or higher) degree, **or**
- met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness).

All paraprofessionals hired on or before Jan. 8, 2002, must satisfy the requirements by Jan. 8, 2006.

The new ESEA legislation will apply according to the table below:

JOB DUTIES	DOES ESEA APPLY?
English/ESL translator	NO
Schoolwide Title I, parent involvement activities	NO
Schoolwide Title I, all other paraprofessionals	YES
Title I Targeted Assistance Program funded by Title I	YES
Title I Targeted Assistance Program not funded by Title I	NO

The law does not require a paper-and-pencil test for assessing paraprofessional quality. However, there must be evidence that the assessment is valid and reliable. Also, the assessment results must be documented, i.e., there must be a record of the assessment and the individual's performance on that assessment. The paraprofessional assessment is expected to evaluate paraprofessional candidates at a level equivalent to the second year of college.

Under the ESEA, a paraprofessional is an individual with education duties working under the supervision of a highly qualified teacher. The teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities, and the paraprofessional carries out and evaluates the achievement of students. Individuals who work solely in non-regular education roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, clerical personal care services, and non-regular education computer assistance, are not considered paraprofessionals for Title I purposes and are not required to meet the requirements.

The responsibilities of paraprofessionals also are listed in the law. According to the law, a paraprofessional assisting in instruction may additionally be assigned:

- to provide one-on-one tutoring for eligible students if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher;
- to assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials;
- to provide assistance in a computer laboratory;
- to conduct parental involvement activities;
- to provide support in a library or media center;
- to act as a translator; or
- to provide instructional services to students under direct supervision of a teacher.

The requirements apply to all paraprofessionals who assist with education or instructional support duties in a schoolwide Title I program, without regard to whether the position is funded with Federal, State, or local funds. In a Title I targeted assistance program, the requirements apply to all paraprofessionals who assist with instructional duties who are paid with Title I funds. If an LEA does not receive Title I funds, the requirements do not apply. Similarly, if an LEA receives Title I funds but a school does not receive Title I funds, the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in that school. A paraprofessional who is proficient in English and a language other than English whose only responsibility is to serve as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other requirements. Similarly, a paraprofessional with duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other requirements.

The act also specifies, under Section 1119 (i), that the principal of each school operating a program under Section 1114 (SWP) or Section 1115 (TAS) must attest annually in writing as to whether the school is in compliance with the requirements of this section that all affected paraprofessionals are qualified.

Future DPI Activities

Similar requirements in the ESEA for paraprofessionals are anticipated to be included in IDEA reauthorization. Thus, we encourage districts to include special education paraprofessionals, even if they are not in Title I schools, in planning for implementation of training and assessment requirements.

The Department of Public Instruction developed a needs assessment instrument that will be sent to all principals during January 2003. DPI is also in the process of developing paraprofessional standards and will make recommendations to LEAs concerning assessment. DPI staff is meeting with representatives of professional organizations to develop ways to help districts meet the requirements of ESEA. The final recommendations will be released by spring 2003.

Please continue to consult this website for updates on DPI efforts to assist in implementation of the paraprofessional requirements in ESEA

Specific questions related to this bulletin should be directed to:

Abdallah Bendada
Title II, Part A/Paraprofessional Coordinator
Successful Schools Team
(608) 267-9270
abdallah.bendada@dpi.state.wi.us